WHEN IT RAINED INSIDE ME

M ZAIN UL ABIDEEN

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1

The First Cry

The rain started before dawn — a slow, trembling drizzle that carried the scent of wet soil and something unspoken.

Inside the small maternity ward of **Sahiwal General Hospital**, the air was thick with urgency, but softer than usual.

The corridor lights flickered in tired rhythms, nurses whispering like ghosts afraid to wake the storm outside.

Imran sat on a metal bench, his fingers clasped around a worn tasbeeh. Each bead clicked like the second hand of a clock — every prayer a plea:

"Just let her live... Ya Allah, please let her live."

Behind the half-open door, his wife, **Hania**, struggled for breath. Her cries were not loud, but deep — the kind that seemed to rise from somewhere ancient and infinite. The midwife wiped her forehead, murmuring words of comfort, though even she could feel the air changing — heavy, like the moment before thunder.

Outside, the storm grew.

The rain slid down the windows like tears, blurring the world into gray water.

When the baby's first cry finally broke the silence, it sounded nothing like joy.

It was sharp, echoing through the sterile room and into the hallway — a cry that felt like it was carrying two lives at once.

The nurse smiled faintly. "A boy," she whispered, wrapping him in a soft, white cloth.

But Imran's heart stumbled when he saw the doctor's face — pale, uncertain, apologetic.

"Your son is healthy," the doctor said carefully. "But... we lost her."

The words fell like stones.

For a moment, Imran didn't move.

He looked through the window where rain danced against the glass and whispered,

"Ya Allah... You took her when You gave him."

He stepped into the room. Hania lay still, her hand frozen mid-reach, as if she had tried to touch her son one last time. Imran placed the baby beside her, whispering through trembling lips,

"Look... he's here. You did it."

The rain grew heavier.

Nurses drew the curtains, but the sound of water filled every space — tapping, whispering, mourning.

Imran kissed her forehead, warm for a moment, and then gone.

When he finally picked up the baby, he noticed something strange.

The boy had stopped crying. His wide, dark eyes stared toward the window — toward the rain — as if he already understood something his father didn't.

Imran held him tighter.

"You'll be my strength now," he murmured. "Even if I have

to break for you."

And outside, thunder rolled like a heart learning how to beat again.

That was the night the rain entered their lives — and never truly left.

2

The Man Who Forgot to Smile

The boy was named **Abdul Rafay**, after his grandfather — a name that meant "one who elevates."

But in the small home at the edge of Sahiwal, elevation was a forgotten thing.

The walls were old, the fan creaked with every spin, and the house smelled faintly of milk, medicine, and rain.

Imran tried to smile for his son. He really did.

He would lift Rafay into the air, whispering little prayers into his tiny ears —

"May you never feel alone like I do."

But his voice always broke at the last word.

Neighbors would visit sometimes, bringing sweets and murmured condolences.

"Be strong, bhai," they'd say. "For the boy."

And Imran would nod politely, hiding the shadows under his eyes.

At night, when the house grew quiet, he'd sit by Hania's framed photo, the one where her smile looked half real, half eternal.

He'd whisper into the silence,

"I'm trying, Hania. I'm really trying."

But the truth was, the house had lost its heartbeat.

The only sound that kept it alive was the baby's soft breathing and the rain that came more often than before — as if the sky had taken it upon itself to grieve with them.

As months passed, Rafay began to crawl, to babble, to laugh — a sound that should have been sunshine.

But even laughter can sound lonely when there's no one left to share it.

Imran's health began to wane.

His once bright eyes dimmed, his back hunched slightly, his beard grew untended. He stopped going out, stopped talking much, stopped smiling altogether.

Every morning, he'd hold Rafay close and whisper a single dua:

"Ya Allah, keep him safe. Keep him happy... even if I cannot be."

One evening, the muezzin's call echoed through the wet streets.

The rain had returned again — soft, rhythmic, endless.

Imran sat on the verandah, Rafay asleep in his lap. The child's hand clutched his father's finger tightly, as if his tiny soul feared letting go.

Imran looked up at the darkening clouds.

There was no sound except the rain and the distant hum of life carrying on — life that no longer waited for him.

He whispered, half to himself, half to the sky:

"Hania... he has your eyes."

For the first time in months, a faint smile appeared — fragile, trembling, uncertain.

But when lightning flashed, Rafay stirred, and the smile faded once more.

The man who had once filled rooms with laughter had forgotten how to smile without her.

The next morning, the neighborhood woke to a stillness they couldn't name.

The door of Imran's house remained closed.

Inside, Rafay's cries echoed — desperate, piercing, calling for someone who would never answer again.

By the time the neighbors broke in, the rain had begun once more.

Imran lay motionless beside Hania's photo — peaceful at last.

And in the corner of the room, under a flickering light, little Rafay sat in silence, clutching his father's cold hand.

Outside, the rain kept falling — like the world itself had decided to weep for him.

3

Whispering Walls

The world outside his father's house was louder — too loud for a boy who had lost everything in silence.

When Rafay started school again, his shoes were too big, his uniform faded, and his heart heavier than his backpack.

The other children looked at him with the kind of curiosity people save for broken things.

Whispers followed him like shadows.

"That's the boy whose mother died when he was born."

"His father too, poor thing."

"I heard he cries at night."

The words weren't cruel in tone, but they stung all the same — because pity, Rafay learned, could hurt worse than hate.

Every morning, he'd walk alone to school, clutching the straps of his bag like they might keep him from falling apart.

Sometimes, as he passed the neighborhood, he'd see women on balconies lower their voices when he walked by.

Their words floated on the air — broken, half sentences, heavy with sympathy he didn't ask for.

At school, teachers spoke softly around him.

Some avoided eye contact, unsure of what to say.

But one teacher didn't treat him like he was fragile.

Her name was **Miss Sara** — a literature teacher with kind eyes and a voice that made every word sound like poetry.

She never said "I'm sorry" or "Be strong."

Instead, she said, "Rafay, have you ever read about rain in stories?"

He shook his head.

She smiled.

"Rain isn't sadness, you know. It's a promise — that something new will grow."

From that day, Rafay started sitting in the front row of her class.

When she read aloud, he listened not just to the story, but to the rhythm of her words — the same rhythm the rain once had in his father's house.

Behind the school, near the broken boundary wall, lived a small, scruffy **gray cat**.

Its left ear was torn, and it limped slightly.

Other children threw stones at it, calling it unlucky.

But Rafay saw something familiar in its eyes — loneliness.

Every lunch break, he'd save half of his bread for it.

He'd sit by the wall, quietly breaking the roti into small pieces.

The cat would come closer each day, cautious but curious.

He named it **Mausam** — "weather" — because, like him, it changed with the sky.

Sometimes, he'd whisper to it softly,

"They say I bring bad luck too. Maybe that's why we understand each other."

The cat would meow — a small sound, but enough to make the world feel less empty.

One afternoon, it rained during school hours.

Children ran to the windows, laughing, shouting.

But Rafay sat still, his hand pressed against the glass, eyes distant.

Miss Sara noticed.

She walked over quietly and said, "It's okay to miss the people who loved you. But don't forget — they'd want you to keep walking through the rain, not away from it."

Rafay didn't reply, but for the first time, he didn't look away from the storm.

The rain no longer felt cruel.

It felt like a whisper — like the world remembering his pain and washing it gently.

That evening, as he walked home soaked, Mausam followed him for the first time.

Under the same umbrella of rain, boy and cat walked side by side — two lost souls, finding shelter in each other's silence.

And for a fleeting moment, the whispers of the world faded away.

All that remained was the rhythm of rain... and the quiet heartbeat of something like hope.

4

The Day the Sky Broke

The morning began like any other.

The sky was pale, undecided — clouds gathering quietly, like thoughts that hadn't yet turned into tears.

Rafay, now twelve, sat in the back of his classroom, staring at the window instead of the blackboard.

Miss Sara was teaching about **metaphors** that day.

Her voice floated through the room, soft but steady:

"Sometimes, the sky mirrors our hearts," she said, "and sometimes, it breaks for the same reasons we do."

Rafay didn't know why those words stayed with him —

not until a knock came at the classroom door.

The peon entered, whispering something to Miss Sara.

Her expression changed — first confusion, then quiet sorrow.

She turned toward Rafay, her eyes soft, her lips trembling around words she didn't want to speak.

"Rafay... beta," she said gently.

"You need to go home. Someone... is waiting for you."

Something cold crept through him — a strange silence that made the world distant.

He stood up, the sound of his chair scraping the floor louder than anything else.

The rain began outside — a low, steady drizzle.

The walk home felt endless.

Every step sank into mud, every raindrop struck like a heartbeat out of rhythm.

He didn't run. He just walked — because some part of him already knew.

At the gate, people stood in clusters, faces hidden behind umbrellas, voices muffled by sorrow.

He saw Sajida first — her eyes red, her dupatta soaked.

When she saw him, she whispered something to the man beside her.

Then she stepped forward.

"Rafay..." she said, and stopped.

There were no words left to soften the truth.

He didn't cry immediately.

He just looked past her — toward the courtyard where a white cloth lay on the ground.

The world blurred at the edges.

The rain fell harder.

His knees gave out, and for the first time in years, the boy who had learned to be silent began to tremble.

The funeral was small.

The graveyard smelled of wet earth and grief.

Men murmured prayers, umbrellas bowed like black wings.

Rafay stood still, his eyes fixed on the ground where they lowered the only person who ever whispered *you'll be my strength now.*

As the first handful of dirt hit the coffin, the sky cracked open.

Thunder rolled through the horizon like a scream swallowed

by the heavens.

It wasn't just raining anymore — it was pouring, wild and relentless, like the sky itself couldn't bear the weight.

Miss Sara was there too, standing quietly at the edge.

She had come, holding a small umbrella above Rafay though he didn't seem to notice.

His lips moved, his voice breaking through the rain:

"Baba... if you're with Ammi now... please tell her I'm still trying."

He pressed his small hands into the wet soil.

His tears mixed with rain, his heartbeat drowned in thunder.

For a moment, he wished he could disappear into the earth beside his parents —

to stop being the boy the world pitied, and just be a son again.

Miss Sara knelt beside him, whispering,

"Sometimes, Allah doesn't take people away, Rafay... He hides them in rain so they can still touch you when you cry."

He looked up, the rain streaking down his face, and whispered,

"Then it must be raining inside me."

Miss Sara's eyes softened, but she said nothing.

Because she knew — it was true.

That was the moment it began —

the storm that would live inside Abdul Rafay forever.

That night, Rafay sat by the window of his small room, staring into the dark.

Outside, rain fell without pause.

Inside, it fell too — unseen, unheard, eternal.

5

Ashes of Laughter

The house he moved into after his father's death didn't feel like a home — it felt like a waiting room for the unwanted.

Rafay's **uncle, Nadeem**, lived in a large, two-story house with shining marble floors and laughter that echoed through every room — but not for him.

When Rafay arrived with a small bag of clothes and a photograph of his parents, the laughter stopped for a moment — replaced by uneasy silence.

His aunt, **Shabana**, forced a smile that didn't reach her eyes.

"Beta, this will be your home now," she said softly, but her tone held the stiffness of obligation.

Her children — **Saad, Farhan, and little Mehak** — stood behind her, watching him the way people watch rain when they're safe under a roof — curious but distant.

The first night was the hardest.

Rafay was given a small room on the terrace — one bed, one broken fan, one dim bulb that buzzed louder than his heartbeat.

He sat by the window with his parents' photo in his hands, tracing their faces with his finger as if trying to memorize them

all over again.

Outside, the sky was dry for once.

Inside, it rained quietly — only he could feel it.

He whispered,

"Ammi... Baba... I'm still here. But it doesn't feel like I belong anywhere."

Days turned into weeks.

At breakfast, Rafay ate silently while the others talked and laughed.

His plate was always the last to be filled, and sometimes, conveniently forgotten.

When relatives visited, Shabana would say,

"Yes, he's Imran's son... poor thing. We're doing what we can."

Then she'd glance at Rafay, her voice dropping to a whisper:

"He's a bit quiet. Still... recovering."

He wasn't recovering. He was surviving.

At school, his classmates' whispers had followed him too.

But at home, the silence was sharper — heavy with judgment.

Saad and Farhan often mocked him.

"Why do you always stare at the wall?"

"Don't act like you're special just because your parents died."

He'd lower his head, gripping the edge of his chair, and say nothing.

Mehak, the youngest, was kinder. Sometimes she'd leave a biscuit outside his door or a glass of milk.

But even her kindness felt fragile — like she was afraid to be seen caring.

One evening, as Rafay came home from school drenched in rain, his uncle's voice thundered across the hall.

"Can't you walk properly? Look at the floor! You're dripping

everywhere!"

Rafay froze, mumbling an apology.

Shabana sighed dramatically. "We can't have him ruining the house every day. He should learn to be grateful."

Grateful.

That word burned.

Grateful for pity. Grateful for survival. Grateful for the life they allowed him to live on the edges of theirs.

That night, Rafay couldn't sleep.

He sat by the window again, the same photo in his hands.

He missed his mother's soft voice, his father's quiet prayers, the small home that once smelled of warmth and tea.

He whispered into the dark,

"Baba, they said I should be grateful. But how can I be grateful when I have no one left to thank?"

The wind pushed through the cracks in the wall — cold, hollow, and full of whispers.

And Rafay thought he heard his father's voice, faint as the rustle of rain:

"Be patient, my son. Pain is the teacher of the strong."

He looked up at the stars, his eyes glistening.

"Then why do I still feel so weak?"

Outside, thunder rolled.

Inside, the storm grew quieter — not gone, but waiting.

And somewhere deep in that small, lonely room, the ashes of laughter that once filled his life began to stir — ready, one day, to burn again.

6

The Weight of Silence

The days began to blur.

Morning, school, evening, silence — all repeating like verses in a sad song.

Rafay's books lay unopened most days. His notebooks filled not with lessons, but with doodles — raindrops, faces he missed, and words he couldn't say out loud.

The noise at his uncle's house, the taunts, the small cruelties — they all followed him like invisible weights.

Homework felt meaningless when your heart was too heavy to lift a pen.

At school, his grades slipped.

Teachers began to notice the change — the boy who once sat quietly in the front row now stared out of windows again, lost somewhere rain couldn't reach.

One day, during a math test, he simply stopped writing halfway.

He put down his pencil, stared at the paper, and felt his chest tighten — like numbers had turned into memories.

He thought of his father teaching him how to add using prayer

beads.

He thought of his mother's voice — the one he never heard but always imagined saying, *"I'm proud of you, beta."*

But now there was only silence.

And in that silence, he lost the will to try.

After class, his teacher — **Miss Sara**, now older but still kind — called him to stay.

Her tone was gentle but firm.

"Rafay, what's happening? You used to love learning. You used to ask questions."

He shrugged, his voice barely above a whisper.

"What's the point, Miss? No one cares if I pass or fail."

She looked at him for a long time before speaking.

"Do you know what rain does, Rafay?"

He blinked, confused. "It... falls?"

She smiled faintly. "Yes. But it also cleanses. It feeds. It gives life even to the things that are buried."

She leaned forward, her voice low but full of warmth.

"Your life is like that. You can't control when it rains, but you can decide what grows after."

Rafay stared at her — the first time he truly met someone's eyes in months.

Her words didn't erase the pain, but they left a small spark where everything had gone dark.

The next morning, he woke up before dawn.

The house was quiet. His uncle's family still asleep.

He opened his books and sat by the window — the same window where he used to whisper to the stars.

The pages looked different now — not like burdens, but like doors.

He began to read slowly, his mind heavy but willing.

And outside, the first light of sunrise touched the sky — pale and fragile, but real.

At school, Miss Sara noticed the change immediately.

He still sat quietly, still avoided laughter — but his hand began to rise in class again.

His notebook, once blank, filled with answers and notes.

One afternoon, when the rain began again, Miss Sara smiled at him and said,

"See? Even the sky doesn't give up on falling, Rafay. Why should you give up on rising?"

For the first time in years, he smiled — a small, tired, honest smile.

Because somewhere deep inside him, beneath all the pain and silence, something had begun to grow again.

It was hope.

And it sounded a little like rain.

7

The Rain That Remembered Their Names

Days passed in silence, but one afternoon, something pulled Rafay toward the old graveyard — the place he had avoided for years.

The sky was already gray when he walked there, the air heavy with the smell of rain.

He held a small bunch of white flowers, trembling in his hand.

The first drop fell just as he reached the graves.

One belonged to the mother he never remembered, and the other to the father he could never forget.

He knelt between them, the soil damp beneath his knees.

For a long time, he said nothing. Then, in a broken whisper, words began to escape.

"**Mom... Dad... if you were alive, I would have been a better son.**

I would sleep every night in your hands, Mom...

I'd hug you every morning before going to school.

You'd make lunch for me, and press my uniform like you used to, Dad..."

His voice cracked. The rain began to fall harder.

He looked up at the sky, his tears mixing with the rain that wouldn't stop.

"**Dad... your son's grown now.**

He's learning how to live. He's trying to be strong, not weak.

If you were here, I would help you, care for you...

I'd make you proud."

The wind carried his words across the empty graveyard.

He pressed his forehead against the cold marble, crying until he couldn't tell whether it was rain or his own tears soaking the ground.

Hours passed. The day faded into evening, but Rafay didn't move.

He sat there as thunder rolled across the clouds — like the sky was mourning with him.

When the rain finally slowed, he stood up slowly, his clothes soaked, his heart even heavier.

He whispered,

"**I miss you both... every breath, every day.**"

He left the flowers behind and turned back toward his uncle's house.

The path was muddy, his shoes filled with water, and his eyes still burning from the tears.

By the time he reached home, night had fallen.

No one noticed his wet clothes or swollen eyes.

He went straight to his small room, closed the door, and lay on his bed.

Outside, the rain began again.

And for the first time, he didn't try to hold back the tears.

He let them fall — freely, quietly — because tonight, even the rain seemed to know his pain.

8

Letters to Heaven

The day after the rain, Rafay woke up with swollen eyes and a quiet ache in his chest that words couldn't hold.

The house was silent — his uncle at work, his cousins still asleep.

He sat on his narrow bed, staring at the window where the morning light trembled through the curtain.

Then, almost without thinking, he reached for an old notebook he had found months ago in his father's things.

Its pages were yellowed, but clean — waiting.

He tore out the first page and wrote, slowly:

"Dear Mom and Dad,

I went to see you yesterday.

It rained so much — maybe the sky missed you too.

I cried, but it felt like you were there, listening.

Sometimes I think the rain carries my words to you.

I hope you heard me.

Your son,

Rafay."

His tears fell on the paper, blurring the ink.

He pressed the page to his chest and closed his eyes.

From that day, it became his ritual.

Every night, after everyone else had gone to sleep, Rafay would sit by the dim light of his small lamp and write another letter.

Sometimes he wrote about school —

how his teacher smiled at him that day,

how he got scolded for forgetting homework,

how no one sat beside him at lunch.

Other times, he wrote about missing his mother's touch, his father's voice, and how silence filled the corners of the house.

He cried while writing, every single time.

But the letters became his only comfort —

a bridge between the world he had and the one he lost.

He began saving them carefully in an old tin locker under his bed — the same one that once held his father's tools.

He wrapped each letter in plastic so the ink wouldn't fade, labeling them softly with dates only he would ever read:

"Rainy Day." "Lonely Sunday." "Dad's Birthday." "The Night I Missed You Most."

Weeks turned into months.

The locker grew heavier.

But inside, Rafay's heart began to change —

because with every word, every tear, he was learning something quietly powerful:

That pain written down becomes memory.

And memory, kept safe, becomes love that never dies.

9

The Window of Loneliness

Years slipped quietly through the cracks of time.

Rafay was no longer the small boy who wrote trembling letters by candlelight.

He had started school again — not just to study, but to **prove to himself** that pain could not break him.

Every morning, he wore his faded uniform, polished his old shoes until they shone, and walked through the same streets where people still whispered.

But Rafay kept his head down, carrying both his bag and his past with quiet dignity.

At school, his teacher — **Miss Samina** — became his light in the fog.

She noticed the sadness behind his polite smile.

Whenever Rafay stayed after class, she would sit beside him and say,

"Your parents would be proud, Rafay. You have their strength."

Those words became the small flame that guided him through his darkest days.

He began studying harder — his notebooks filled with neat handwriting, his eyes carrying both pain and purpose.

But while the classroom gave him comfort, home was another story.

His uncle's children — older now, louder, sharper with their words — began to show their true faces.

They mocked his clothes, his silence, even the way he prayed for his parents.

"Orphan boy," one of them whispered once.

It cut deeper than a knife.

Rafay said nothing.

He never did.

He would simply walk away, climb the small stairs to his room, and sit beside the window.

Outside, the evening sky would burn orange, then fade into gray — the same color as the memories in his heart.

He would hold the small picture of his parents in his hands — the one he had kept hidden inside his notebook.

The edges were worn, the colors faded, but to him, it was the most precious thing in the world.

"**Mom, Dad... they don't understand,**" he whispered to the photo, tears glistening in his eyes.

"**I'm trying to be good... I'm studying hard. I just wish you were here to see it.**"

The wind blew through the open window, brushing his face like a gentle hand.

He closed his eyes and pretended it was his mother's touch.

And that night, as stars began to fill the dark, he made himself a promise:

He would keep studying.

He would keep surviving.

One day, the world would know the name **Abdul Rafay** — the boy who had no one but still became someone

10

The First Light

Morning sunlight spilled through the school courtyard as students gathered around the notice board. Laughter, chatter, and excitement filled the air — but Rafay stood quietly at the back, clutching his worn schoolbag.

He didn't expect his name to be there. He never did.

But when the crowd parted for a moment, his eyes caught the words written in bold letters:

"Top Position — Abdul Rafay (Grade 8)."

For a second, the world stopped.

The noise faded.

And a strange warmth spread through his chest — something he hadn't felt in years.

Miss Samina found him standing there, frozen.

Her smile was soft but proud.

"See, Rafay," she said gently, "I told you your parents would be proud. You didn't just pass — you shined."

Tears filled his eyes before he could stop them. He lowered his gaze, whispering,

"Thank you, Miss... For believing in me when no one did."

That evening, Rafay walked home slowly, holding his report card close to his chest.

But as soon as he entered his uncle's house, the joy in his heart began to dim.

His uncle barely looked up from his chair.

"Oh. You topped your class?" he said flatly, not looking away from the television.

Before Rafay could answer, one of his cousins muttered,

"Probably because the teachers feel sorry for him."

Laughter followed. Cruel. Cold.

Rafay tried to smile, to stay quiet — but inside, something broke again.

He went to his small room, closed the door, and sat by the same window where he always found his peace.

The sunset painted his face in gold and sadness.

He pulled out the photograph of his parents again and whispered,

"**I did it, Mom... Dad... I really did it.**

Even if no one here cares... I know you do."

His tears fell silently, landing on the report card that lay open in his lap.

11

The Teacher Who Paid in Love

Time moved forward like a tired song.

Rafay was growing — taller, quieter, older than his years.

His school life became the only place where he could still breathe freely.

He studied with the hunger of someone who had lost too much.

Every grade he earned felt like a whisper to his parents' graves:

"I'm still trying. I haven't stopped."

But at home, things grew darker.

His uncle's eyes, once indifferent, now held something sharper — envy.

The better Rafay did, the colder the house became.

The cousins mocked his seriousness, his books, his dreams.

"You think you'll be some big man?" one sneered.

"You don't even belong here."

Rafay said nothing.

He just lowered his head and kept studying.

Until one evening, everything shattered.

His uncle called him into the living room.

The TV was on, but the volume muted — only silence between

them.

"Rafay," his uncle said sternly,

"you've finished school. That's enough. No need for more education. It's time you find work. You're old enough."

Rafay froze.

"But... Uncle," he whispered, "I want to study more. I want to become something."

His uncle's tone hardened.

"And who will pay? You think I will? You've lived here long enough. Books don't feed a house."

The words hit him like stones.

Rafay's voice trembled.

"Please... I'll work part-time, I'll—"

"Enough!" his uncle snapped.

"From tomorrow, you won't go back to that school."

Rafay stood still, his eyes filling but his heart refusing to break in front of them.

He quietly walked back to his room, shut the door, and sat in the dark.

The old photo of his parents glimmered under the faint streetlight coming through the window.

He pressed it to his chest and whispered,

"Why does the world hate me for dreaming?"

The next morning, he didn't show up at school.

But one person noticed — **Miss Samina**.

She went straight to his uncle's house that afternoon.

When she arrived, she didn't scold or shout. She simply said,

"Rafay is one of the brightest students I've ever taught. He deserves to study."

His uncle laughed bitterly.

"Deserve? You'll pay for him then?"

Without a moment's pause, she nodded.

"Yes. I will."

The room fell silent.

Even his cousins stopped smirking.

That evening, when Rafay found out, he couldn't stop crying.

He ran to school the next morning and found Miss Samina standing by the classroom window.

He hugged his books tightly and said in a trembling voice,

"Miss, I'll never forget this. You didn't just pay my fees — you saved my dream."

Her eyes softened.

"No, Rafay. You saved it yourself. I just gave you a chance to keep walking."

But back at his uncle's house, things got worse.

Whispers turned into cold stares.

Cousins stopped talking to him altogether.

Sometimes, his meals were left out cold, untouched on the table.

He ate alone, studied alone, lived alone — but he never gave up.

Each night, he wrote another letter for his locker:

Dear Mom and Dad,

They don't want me to study.

But I will. Because you taught me to never stop believing.

Today, someone helped me — not for who I am, but for what I can be.

Maybe God still remembers me.

— Rafay

He folded it gently, slipped it into the metal locker, and whispered into the quiet,

"Someday, Mom... Dad... I'll make all this pain worth something."

12

The City of New Beginnings

Time moved like a quiet river — carrying away the years of Rafay's pain, yet never letting him forget where he came from.

He finished college with top marks.

Every exam, every sleepless night, every tear shed under the dull light of his study lamp had led to this moment.

When the results were announced, the principal himself called his name during the ceremony.

"**Abdul Rafay — Highest Marks in the District. Awarded a Full Scholarship for University.**"

Applause filled the hall.

But inside Rafay, there was silence — the kind that only those who have lost everything can feel when they finally win something.

Miss Samina sat in the front row, her eyes wet.

She clapped the loudest.

And in that moment, Rafay didn't just see his teacher — he saw the kindness of every soul who had ever believed in him.

When he reached home that evening, his uncle barely spoke.

His cousins didn't congratulate him.

They looked away, pretending not to hear.

That night, Rafay sat by his window again — the same one where he had cried so many times before — and whispered to the picture of his parents,

"**Mom... Dad... I got the scholarship. I did it. But it hurts... it hurts that no one here is proud.**"

The next morning, he made a quiet decision — one that would change his life forever.

He packed his books, a few clothes, and the photo of his parents.

And before sunrise, he left his uncle's house for good.

No one stopped him.

No one even came out to say goodbye.

The city that greeted him was loud, busy, and full of life — everything his old world wasn't.

He rented a small room near the university — just four walls, a bed, and a window that faced the crowded street below.

At first, loneliness returned — sharper than ever.

But this time, it didn't break him.

He had learned how to carry it like a shadow.

Rafay joined the **University of Modern Sciences**, where he began his degree in **Computer Science**.

In the beginning, it felt impossible — new city, new people, new fears.

But soon, he met **Hamza**, a kind, cheerful classmate who saw beyond Rafay's silence.

Hamza became his first real friend — not out of pity, but respect.

He helped Rafay with assignments, introduced him to others, and made sure he wasn't alone in the cafeteria anymore.

One evening, when Hamza saw Rafay working late in the lab,

he asked,

"Why do you study so much, Rafay? You never rest."

Rafay smiled faintly and replied,

"Because I'm not studying for grades. I'm studying to prove that I can rise — even when no one believed I would."

Hamza nodded. "Then you will rise, my friend. You already are."

To survive, Rafay took a part-time job at a small electronics shop near campus.

He worked there after classes — fixing computers, organizing shelves, and saving every rupee he could.

He often returned to his room exhausted, but instead of complaining, he'd whisper to his parents' photo,

"**I'm doing it, Mom... Dad. Your son's standing on his own feet now.**"

And on nights when the city lights shimmered outside his window, he'd open his old locker — the one he had brought from his uncle's house — and read the letters he once wrote.

Some pages were smudged with tears, others torn at the edges,

but together, they told the story of a boy who refused to let pain define him.

That boy was now a man —

still broken in places, but glowing quietly in others.

And though the road ahead was long, for the first time in his life, Rafay wasn't walking through the rain —

he was walking **toward the light**.

13

Dreams Made of Code

University life moved fast — like the city itself.

Days blurred into nights, assignments into deadlines, and lectures into long hours of silence in the computer lab.

But through it all, **Rafay never stopped moving.**

He attended classes with quiet focus, sat in the front row, and took notes with the same precision he once used to write his letters to his parents.

For everyone else, university was freedom.

For Rafay, it was survival.

His friendship with **Hamza** deepened.

They studied together, shared meals, and talked for hours about life, pain, and the kind of dreams people are afraid to speak aloud.

Hamza often joked,

"You don't talk much, Rafay, but when you do, it feels like you've lived a thousand lives."

Rafay smiled faintly.

"I had to," he replied softly. "Silence teaches you things words never can."

Money was tight.

Some nights, Rafay skipped dinner so he could save enough for next month's rent.

He'd finish his shift at the electronics shop, walk home tired and hungry, but instead of sleeping, he'd open his laptop and practice coding until dawn.

There was something peaceful about it —

the rhythm of keys under his fingers, the logic of lines coming together to create something that *worked*, something *beautiful.*

He found a strange comfort in it —

because in code, everything had reason and order,

while life had given him only chaos.

One rainy evening, Hamza found him still sitting in the lab.

The clock showed 1:30 a.m.

"Rafay," Hamza said gently, "you've been here all night. What are you working on?"

Rafay looked up, eyes tired but alive.

"I'm building something," he said quietly. "A program that remembers."

Hamza frowned. "Remembers what?"

Rafay hesitated, then whispered,

"My parents. Their birthdays, the letters I wrote... everything I never want to forget."

Hamza's eyes softened.

"That's not just a project, Rafay. That's your heart written in code."

Weeks later, Rafay presented his small software project in class — **"Memoir: A Digital Diary for the Lost."**

It could store memories, letters, photos — and even play a sound of rain while reading them aloud.

When he finished his presentation, the room was silent.

Even the professor had to clear his throat before speaking.

"This isn't just coding," he said. "This is emotion turned into logic. This... is art."

Applause followed — but Rafay's eyes were distant.

He wasn't hearing them.

He was imagining his parents in the audience, smiling through the light.

That night, back in his small room, Rafay wrote another letter — one he didn't lock away.

> ***Dear Mom and Dad,***
> *Today, I made something from my pain.*
> *It's not perfect, but it's mine.*
> *I think I finally understand what you wanted for me —*
> *not just to live, but to create.*
> *To make my pain mean something.*
> ***— Your son, Rafay***

He placed the letter beside the photo of his parents and whispered,

"Maybe I'm not alone after all."

Outside, the city lights blinked like stars,

and for the first time in years, Rafay smiled — small, tired, but real.

Because tonight, he wasn't just surviving.

He was **becoming.**

14

The Hackathon of Hope

The next few months passed like a dream that refused to fade.

Rafay's project, **"Memoir,"** quietly spread around the university.

At first, it was just classmates sharing it out of curiosity — but soon professors began mentioning his name in lectures, saying things like *"You should see what Rafay built — emotion turned into code."*

Then one morning, while he was sipping tea at the shop where he worked part-time, an email arrived:

> Congratulations, Rafay Ahmed.
> Your project has been shortlisted for the National Tech Hackathon.

He read it three times before it felt real.

His hands trembled — not with fear, but with a quiet disbelief.

After years of darkness, the world was finally opening a door.

The hackathon was held in Lahore — bright halls filled with young minds, all coding, dreaming, building.

Rafay stood among them, wearing his faded blue shirt, laptop in hand, a spark in his eyes that no exhaustion could dim.

When his turn came, he stood before the judges and spoke, voice steady but soft:

> *"Technology isn't just about solving problems.*
> *Sometimes, it's about remembering the people we lost while trying to solve ourselves."*

He showed them **Memoir** — the rain sounds, the stored letters, the photos, the soft glow of memory turned into digital form.

When he finished, there was silence again — the same kind of silence that comes when something real touches people deeply.

And then came applause — loud, long, unrestrained.

That evening, the winners were announced.

Rafay's name was called first.

He stood frozen for a moment, then slowly walked to the stage.

The lights were warm, the crowd cheering, Hamza clapping the hardest in the front row.

For the first time in his life, Rafay wasn't invisible.

He wasn't the boy from the rain-soaked alley of memories —

He was **Rafay Ahmed, the developer, the dreamer, the creator.**

The prize wasn't just a trophy.

It came with an internship offer at a well-known software company.

Days turned into months, and Rafay grew — not just in skill, but in spirit.

He learned new languages, built applications, mentored juniors, and helped others chase their dreams.

He became the kind of person his younger self once wished to

meet — calm, kind, and quietly brilliant.

One night, while watching the rain outside his office window, Hamza called.

"Bro, do you ever think about how far you've come?"

Rafay smiled faintly.

"I do," he said. "Sometimes I still can't believe it. I used to code to escape my pain... now I code to express it."

"Maybe that's the secret," Hamza laughed.

"Turning your scars into software."

Rafay looked at his reflection in the glass — older, stronger, peaceful.

He whispered,

"Maybe pain was never meant to break me.

Maybe it was meant to build me."

Outside, the rain kept falling.

But this time, it didn't sound like sorrow.

It sounded like **home.**

15

The Warmth I Once Lost

The years had turned quietly.

Rafay was no longer the fragile boy who stared out of rainy windows, waiting for someone to understand his silence.

Now, he was a man — a skilled software engineer, confident yet humble, working at one of the most reputed IT companies in the city.

The walls of his small apartment were still bare, but his life wasn't empty anymore.

Each morning began with coffee, the gentle hum of his laptop, and sunlight falling through the curtains — warmth he once thought he'd never feel again.

The First Meeting

Her name was **Zoya.**

A new hire — full of energy, curiosity, and that rare kindness that didn't need words to be understood.

Their first conversation happened over a debugging issue.

She leaned over his desk, asking,

"Can you check why my code keeps breaking here?"

Rafay smiled faintly, fixed the line, and said,

"You just forgot to close the loop. Happens to the best of us."

She laughed, a sound so light it felt like sunlight after rain.

Something inside him — something long asleep — stirred.

The Unspoken Connection

Days turned into weeks.

Lunch breaks became shared moments — laughter over coffee, small jokes about work, quiet walks after office hours.

Zoya talked about her family often — her mother's morning prayers, her father's strict but loving advice, her younger brother's silly pranks.

Rafay would listen quietly, smiling — yet somewhere deep inside, her stories ached like gentle bruises.

He realized he wasn't jealous — he was simply remembering what it felt like to have *someone waiting for you at home.*

The First Visit

One evening, Zoya invited him to her home.

"Baba really wants to meet you," she said shyly.

Rafay hesitated — meeting families always reopened his old scars — but he agreed.

When he entered her house, it was filled with warmth.

Zoya's mother served tea with soft hands; her father asked about his work, proud of his achievements.

Her little brother wouldn't stop talking about video games, and her sister teased Zoya the entire evening.

Rafay sat there quietly, heart full and eyes soft.

He hadn't felt this kind of belonging in years.

That night, when he returned home, he cried — not from pain, but from *overwhelming gratitude.*

It felt like his parents were watching through the stars, smiling.

The Realization

Over months, love grew silently between them — not the loud, cinematic kind, but a gentle one that healed.

Zoya became his peace, his home, his reflection.

One evening, standing under a silver rain, he looked at her and said softly,

"You know, when I lost everything, I thought life had stopped raining.

But then I met you — and I realized, some rains don't destroy... they help you grow."

She smiled through tears and whispered,

"I'll never let your rain drown you again."

The Wedding

Their wedding was small — under soft lights, surrounded by laughter, with the scent of jasmine in the air.

When Zoya's father placed her hand in Rafay's, he said,

"You're a good man, Rafay. My daughter's lucky — but I think we're luckier to have you."

Rafay looked at them — his new family — and bowed his head slightly, hiding the tears in his eyes.

For the first time in his life, he didn't feel like an outsider.

That night, he stood by the window, Zoya's hand in his, and

whispered to the stars,

"Ammi, Abbu... I made it.

Your son has found home again."

And outside, it began to rain — soft, steady, peaceful.

But this time, it didn't rain *inside him.*

It rained *with him.*

16

Home at Last

The soft morning light fell across the curtains of their small apartment. The world outside was waking up — the faint sound of city traffic, the aroma of tea, and the quiet rhythm of two hearts learning to breathe together.

Zoya was standing in the kitchen, humming softly as she made breakfast.

Rafay watched her from the doorway, still half in awe that she was really *there*.

For years, mornings had been silent — now, they began with warmth, laughter, and the sound of her calling,

"Rafay, your tea's getting cold!"

He smiled — a real smile, one that reached his eyes.

The First Weeks

Their life was simple but full of peace.

Evenings were spent on the balcony, talking about dreams.

Zoya would read aloud from her favorite novels while Rafay worked on his laptop. Sometimes she would lean on his shoulder,

tracing circles on his arm while whispering,

"Promise me you'll never forget how far you've come."

He'd reply softly,

"I won't. But sometimes I still wake up thinking I have to earn love, not receive it."

And she'd say,

"You've earned enough pain. Now let love stay."

Memories Return

Some nights, Rafay would wake up from dreams — flashes of his childhood, his mother's smile, his father's hand, and that endless rain.

Zoya would find him sitting by the window, eyes wet, staring at the moon.

One night, she knelt beside him and took his hand.

"What do you see when you look at the sky?"

He whispered, "Them."

"Your parents?"

He nodded. "Sometimes I feel like they're watching, making sure I don't fall again."

Zoya smiled gently. "Then maybe the sky isn't above you anymore, Rafay. Maybe it's around you — in every love you give, in every good thing you do."

He closed his eyes, letting her words settle inside him like light finding a forgotten corner of a dark room.

Forgiveness

Months passed. Rafay began visiting his uncle again — not because he had to, but because his heart had healed enough to forgive.

His uncle's hair had turned gray, his tone softer. The cousins who once mocked him now looked at him with quiet respect.

When Rafay gave them gifts — a new fan for the house, some books for the children — his uncle said, almost in shame,

"You've become a good man, Rafay... better than I ever was to you."

Rafay smiled, not bitterly but kindly.

"You taught me what I didn't want to become. And for that, I'm thankful."

It wasn't revenge. It was *release.*

Love as a Mirror

Zoya often told him,

"You carry your past like a poem, not a wound. That's why people feel something when they meet you."

He didn't understand it at first, but with every passing day, he realized — love wasn't about erasing pain. It was about transforming it.

Every tear he had ever shed had led him here — to peace, to purpose, to her.

That night, as rain tapped gently on their window, Rafay whispered,

"It's raining again."

Zoya smiled, resting her head on his shoulder.

"Yes. But this time, it's raining *with* you, not *inside* you."

And as they sat there, wrapped in warmth and memory, Rafay looked up at the night sky — soft, endless, forgiving — and whispered,

"Ammi, Abbu... I finally understand why it had to rain."

17

The Hands That Once Trembled

It was a Sunday morning.

The city was quiet — washed clean by the night's rain.

Rafay sat on the balcony with Zoya, sipping tea, watching children play football in the muddy street below.

Their laughter echoed up to the window, mixing with the smell of wet earth.

He smiled faintly... but something inside him stirred.

The sound of their laughter carried him back to his own childhood — a little boy sitting by a grave, clutching a photo, wondering why the world felt so cold.

He set his cup down quietly.

"Zoya," he said, "I think I know what I need to do next."

She looked at him curiously. "What do you mean?"

He turned toward her, eyes calm but bright.

"I want to build something for kids who've lost what I lost — a place that doesn't let them feel alone. A home for the ones the world forgets."

Zoya's eyes softened. "You mean... an orphanage?"

He nodded slowly.

"Not just an orphanage. A place where they can dream. Learn. Build futures. A place where the rain doesn't mean sorrow."

The First Step

It began small — one rented house on the edge of the city.

Rafay used half his savings and half his heart to make it real.

He called it **"The Haven of Hope."**

He decorated the rooms with color and warmth — painted stars on the ceiling, filled bookshelves with stories, and placed computers on small desks, just like the ones he once longed for.

Zoya stood beside him the day they opened the doors.

When the first group of children walked in — some shy, some scared, some with eyes that looked too old for their faces — Rafay knelt down to greet them.

"Welcome home," he said softly. "No one will forget you here."

And as he said those words, his voice broke.

Because deep inside, he was saying them to his *younger self.*

The Boy Named Hamza

Among the children was a quiet boy named Hamza — thin, quiet, with eyes full of storms.

Rafay saw himself in that boy.

One evening, Hamza sat alone by the window, staring at the sky. Rafay sat beside him.

"Missing someone?" he asked gently.

Hamza nodded. "My mother."

Rafay's throat tightened. "I miss mine too."

The boy looked up, surprised. "Really?"

Rafay smiled. "Yes. But you know what I've learned? They never leave us. They just change places — from beside us... to inside us."

Hamza's lips trembled. He leaned into Rafay's arms and whispered, "Can you be my father until I see her again?"

Rafay held him close, tears falling silently into the boy's hair.

"Always," he whispered. "Always."

Healing in Return

Days turned into weeks.

The Haven of Hope filled with laughter — the kind that Rafay once thought he'd never hear again.

He spent evenings teaching the kids computer skills, telling them,

"Your pain doesn't define you — your purpose does."

Zoya helped too — organizing school supplies, cooking, and reading bedtime stories.

Their small home became a heartbeat of kindness in the middle of a harsh world.

One night, Rafay stood outside the orphanage under the rain.

He looked up at the sky and said quietly,

"Mom... Dad... it finally stopped raining inside me."

And in that moment, the rain fell softly — not as sorrow, but as *blessing.*

18

The Rain of Blessings

The morning call to prayer echoed softly through the city.

The first light of dawn spilled into Rafay and Zoya's home, painting everything in gold and stillness.

Zoya was in the hospital bed, her face glowing with both exhaustion and joy.

Rafay stood beside her, eyes wet, heart trembling as he held two tiny hands for the first time — one in each palm.

A nurse smiled and whispered,

"Mubarak ho... Allah has blessed you with twins — a boy and a girl."

Rafay froze. His lips trembled.

For a moment, he couldn't speak — his heart felt too full, his throat too tight.

He looked at Zoya, tears streaming down his face, and whispered,

"Zoya... do you see? Allah didn't just fill the emptiness... He gave us two reasons to smile again."

Zoya smiled weakly, her eyes shimmering.

"He saw how much you cried, Rafay... now He's showing how

much He listened."

The Names

The boy had eyes like the sky before rain — calm, deep, full of promise.

The girl had her mother's smile — soft, bright, pure.

They named them **Rayyan** and **Hoorain.**

When Rafay whispered the Adhan into their tiny ears, his voice shook with gratitude.

"Allah is the Greatest..."

He paused, wiping his tears, "...and His mercy never forgets."

The Father's Heart

Days turned into nights filled with baby laughter, sleepless cries, and quiet prayers of thanks.

Sometimes Rafay would hold them both, rocking them gently while whispering,

"I lost my parents too early... but I'll never let you feel what I felt. Not a single day."

Zoya would smile from the couch, watching him.

"You're not just a father, Rafay," she'd say softly. "You're rewriting what love means."

He'd glance at her and reply,

"No... I'm just learning how to hold joy without fear of losing it."

The Haven of Hope Expands

While Rafay's home filled with blessings, his dream — *The Haven of Hope* — began to grow too.

With the help of donations, volunteers, and the fame of his tech success, his foundation expanded into a full-fledged institute — with classrooms, a computer lab, and even a small playground.

News channels started to feature his story.

"The orphan who built a home for orphans," one headline read.

But Rafay never let fame reach his heart.

He always said in interviews,

"I'm not special. I just never stopped believing that pain can be turned into purpose — if you let Allah guide you through the rain."

The Circle of Love

One Friday evening, after Maghrib prayer, Rafay took his twins to *The Haven of Hope.*

As children gathered around, laughing and hugging him, he looked at his own kids and whispered,

"This is the world I wanted you to see — a world where kindness is louder than pain."

Rayyan tugged at his sleeve, pointing at the sky.

"Abu, look! It's raining!"

Rafay looked up — soft drizzle falling like mercy.

He smiled and whispered,

"Yes, my son... but this time, it's raining only with blessings."

Zoya watched from afar, holding her daughter, tears in her

eyes.

She knew — the boy who once cried alone at his parents' grave had finally built a world where no child would cry alone again.

19

Roots of Hope

The building that once echoed with a handful of children's laughter now stood tall — bright walls, wide windows, a courtyard blooming with flowers, and a computer lab filled with the hum of learning.

Rafay stood by the entrance, watching as dozens of children ran across the yard, chasing the wind.

Each smile was a story.

Each story was a prayer answered.

He turned to the new board hanging at the gate:

"The Haven of Hope — Founded by Abdul Rafay."

Below it, in smaller letters, the words he lived by were written:

> "From rain we grew."

A Dream That Grew Wings

Years ago, Rafay had walked through storms of loneliness. Now, he was walking through halls filled with laughter, chalk dust, and purpose.

The foundation had grown into a full-fledged organization — offering free education, food, counseling, and computer training to orphaned and underprivileged children.

Volunteers came from universities. Corporations sponsored programs.

His pain had become *a blueprint for change.*

A Visit from His Old Teacher

One afternoon, as he reviewed reports in his office, his assistant knocked.

"Sir, someone wants to meet you — says she was your teacher."

Rafay looked up, stunned.

When Miss Samina walked in, the years melted away. Her hair was gray now, her steps slower, but her smile was exactly the same — warm, kind, and proud.

"I heard about all you've done, Rafay," she said, her eyes misty. "I always knew you'd turn your pain into something beautiful."

He stood, emotion tightening his voice.

"Miss... if you hadn't paid my school fee that day, none of this would exist."

She smiled softly.

"I didn't pay your fee, Rafay. I just pushed open the door. You were the one who walked through it."

Recognition and Reflection

Within a few years, *The Haven of Hope* became known across the country.

Television channels ran documentaries, tech companies offered grants, and government officials visited to see the change firsthand.

But Rafay never sat in the front row of events.

He always stood behind the children, clapping for them.

During an interview, a journalist asked,

"Mr. Rafay, what inspired this journey?"

He paused for a long time, looking at the children in the background — their laughter filling the courtyard.

Then he said quietly,

"Loneliness did. But Allah turned that loneliness into love."

A Moment of Prayer

One evening, Rafay sat alone in the small masjid within the foundation's campus.

He bowed his head in sujood, whispering:

"Ya Allah, You took everything from me so You could give me more than I ever dreamed.

You broke me only to rebuild me — not for myself, but for them."

Tears rolled down his cheeks as he lifted his head.

Outside, a soft rain began to fall.

He stepped out into the courtyard, watching the children dance under the rain — carefree, laughing, alive.

He smiled through his tears and whispered,

"It's still raining, but now it's raining *hope.*"

The Foundation Expands

Within months, Rafay launched two more branches — one in Karachi, another in Lahore.

He trained teams of educators and developers to continue the mission.

He started a scholarship program for bright children who dreamed of becoming doctors, engineers, and teachers.

Zoya watched him from afar, her heart full of pride.

"Every drop of rain you once cried," she told him, "has turned into a child's laughter now."

Rafay smiled gently.

"Then let it rain forever."

20

The Return Home

Years had passed, and life had come full circle for Rafay. He was now a respected software developer, a husband, and a proud father of twin babies who filled his life with laughter and light. His foundation was thriving — helping poor students get an education, just like his teacher once helped him.

One bright morning, Rafay decided it was time to return to his hometown — the place where his journey began, where pain once lived, but also where his roots lay deep. With his wife and twins beside him, he drove back to his uncle's city.

As they arrived, memories flooded his heart — the old streets, the familiar buildings, and the air filled with emotions. When he reached his uncle's house, everyone was surprised to see him. His uncle's family, once distant and harsh, now stood quietly. Rafay greeted them with respect and a gentle smile. His success, his calmness, and his humility softened their hearts.

Later, he took his family to the graveyard — to the place where his parents rested. Standing before their graves, Rafay's eyes filled with tears. He whispered softly,

"Ammi, Abbu... I came back. Today I've returned with happiness. Allah blessed me with a good wife and two beautiful babies. I did it... Alhamdulillah."

He placed fresh flowers on their graves, kissed the cold marble, and held his twins close. Tears rolled down his cheeks — not of sorrow, but of peace. The wind blew gently, as if carrying his parents' blessings from the heavens above.

At that moment, Rafay realized — his pain had shaped his purpose, and his journey of struggle had turned into a story of faith, patience, and victory.

21

The Light of Hope

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Would you like me to continue this into a **final chapter (Chapter 21)** — showing how Rafay expands his foundation to help orphans like he once was?

You said:

chapter 21 added it rafay grow and foundation and work all well know person become

ChatGPT said:

Chapter 21 — The Light of Hope

Years continued to pass, and Rafay's name began to shine brightly — not just as a successful developer, but as a man with a golden heart. His foundation, which he had started with a small dream, grew into one of the most respected charitable organizations in the country.

The *Rafay Foundation* worked tirelessly to support orphans, needy students, and families who struggled to afford education. He never forgot where he came from — the pain of losing his parents, the loneliness, and the days when even a kind word felt rare. That pain had now become his strength and his mission.

Rafay was often invited to schools, universities, and conferences. People admired not only his achievements but his

humility. Reporters would ask, "Rafay, what inspired you to build such a foundation?"

And he would smile softly and reply,

> *"My parents' prayers and my teacher's guidance. They taught me that pain is not the end — it's the beginning of purpose."*

His wife stood proudly beside him, supporting every dream. Their twins, now growing fast, often visited the foundation with him. Rafay would kneel beside them and say,

> *"Never forget to help others, because that's where true success lives."*

As years went on, Rafay became a well-known and deeply respected person — not for wealth or fame, but for kindness and compassion. He built schools, provided scholarships, and gave hope to hundreds of children who once stood where he did.

And every evening, when he looked at the sky, he whispered the same words he had said years ago at his parents' grave:

> *"Alhamdulillah... I did it. And I'm still doing it."*

The stars seemed to shine a little brighter — as if his parents were smiling from above, proud of the son who turned pain into purpose and dreams into reality.

22

The Gentle Nights

Years rolled by like soft rain on an old window. Rafay's twins had grown — bright, curious, full of questions. Every morning, he dropped them off at school, holding their tiny hands just as he once wished his father had held his. When they waved goodbye, he smiled, his heart calm and full.

In the evenings, Rafay returned home after work, where laughter filled every corner. He played with his children, helped his wife in the kitchen, and listened to their stories about school. Their giggles were the music of his peace — a melody that healed every scar from his past.

Every night, before bedtime, his children would ask,

"Papa, tell us your story again — the one about the rain."

So, he told them — about the little boy who lost everything but never gave up. About how he learned that life is not fair, but it can still be beautiful. He told them how love, kindness, and patience can turn tears into strength.

Then he would say softly,

"Life is not easy, my children. But if you learn to understand the pain of others, you will understand the real meaning of life."

When they finally fell asleep, Rafay would go to his study. There, inside his old locker, were hundreds of letters he had written to his parents over the years — his silent prayers, his gratitude, his memories.

One night, he wrote another letter:

"Dear Mom and Dad,

I made it. Allah blessed me with a family, happiness, and peace. Maybe this is life — not perfect, but full of purpose. Life is the name of ups and downs, of prayers and patience. I never forgot you, not for a single day. Your son learned how to smile through pain."

He folded the letter gently, placed it in the locker, and wiped a tear from his cheek. Then he smiled softly and whispered,

"Maybe this is life — to fall, to rise, to love, to lose, and to be grateful."

He looked toward his children sleeping peacefully and thanked Allah.

For the rain that once broke him... had now taught him how to bloom.

23

When the Rain Finally Smiled

Years drifted by like pages in a book that life itself had written.

Rafay had grown older — silver threads now danced in his hair, and fine lines framed his eyes, not of sorrow anymore, but of wisdom. His once-trembling hands, the same that wrote hundreds of letters to his parents, now held the hands of his grown children — the twins who had become the pride of his life.

His son was now an engineer, building software to help orphans find education online. His daughter was a writer — gentle, kind, and full of light — crafting stories that made readers weep and heal, just as her father once did with his pain.

Rafay's **foundation**, "*The Rain Within*," had grown across the nation, helping thousands of children who had lost their parents — giving them education, homes, and hope. People no longer whispered *"the boy whose mother died"* — they now said, *"the man who turned grief into greatness."*

One evening, Rafay sat on the porch of his house, watching the sunset bleed orange across the sky. His wife joined him, placing a cup of tea beside him. Their home was filled with laughter —

his children, his grandchildren running in the garden, chasing the last golden rays of day.

A gentle rain began to fall.

He looked up at the sky, smiling — tears mingling with the raindrops.

> *"Mom... Dad..." he whispered softly,*
> *"It's raining again. But this time, not inside me. It's just rain — and I'm at peace."*

He closed his eyes for a moment, hearing the laughter of his grandchildren echo through the house. It was the sound of life — of love, of healing, of everything he once dreamed of.

On the wall behind him hung two framed pictures — his parents, smiling eternally. Beneath them, the words he once wrote as a boy were engraved:

> "Maybe this is life — to lose, to love, to fall, to rise, and to be grateful."

And as the rain kissed the earth, Rafay smiled, knowing that **the storm which once shattered him had, in truth, taught him how to shine.**